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February 9, 1981

The Honorable Charles McC. Mathias, Jr.  
United States Senate  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Sir:

In view of your recently expressed interest in placing an increased emphasis on issues of civil liberties and foreign affairs, the subject of this letter may hold a special significance for you. I am writing to you about the plight of a man who rightfully should be one of the most honored figures of our time, and yet has remained, until recently, almost unknown--his name is Raoul Wallenberg. He was one of the greatest and least acknowledged heroes of World War II. He disappeared while engaged in a mission that saved thousands of innocent lives, a mission that was initiated by the United States. There is substantial evidence that he remains, to this day, a prisoner in the Soviet Union.

In 1944, Wallenberg, then a young Swedish diplomat, journeyed to Budapest, Hungary, at the request of the U. S. government. His mission was to rescue as many Jews as possible from deportation to Nazi concentration camps. Time and again, Wallenberg courageously confronted Nazi officials, and, acting in his diplomatic capacity, personally intervened to prevent the deportation of Jews to almost certain death. His bold actions, taken at great personal risk, have been credited with saving as many as 100,000 Jews from annihilation at the hands of the Nazis.

Shortly after Soviet troops entered Budapest in 1945, Wallenberg was taken into custody by the Soviets, and disappeared. Since that time, the Soviet government has alternately denied any knowledge of his subsequent fate or claimed that he died in 1947 in a Soviet prison. However, individuals released from prisons in the Soviet Union over the years have told of encountering Wallenberg while they were imprisoned, and reports have persisted that he is still alive. Interest in the Wallenberg affair has increased steadily in recent years, and only a few weeks ago, an international conference was convened in Stockholm to evaluate extensive evidence and testimony

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Hon. Charles McC. Mathias, Jr.

regarding his detention by the Soviets. By the time it concluded, the conferees were unanimous in their belief that Wallenberg is still alive and is, in fact, being detained in the Soviet Union.

Wallenberg undertook the rescue mission that led to his disappearance at the request of the U. S. government. In return, our government has an obligation to assist in ascertaining the whereabouts of this great man and securing his release from captivity in the Soviet Union. Legislation is soon to be introduced in the Congress to confer U. S. citizenship on Wallenberg. This would be an important step in according him the recognition he so richly deserves, and in calling public attention to his plight. I urge you to support this legislation, as well as any other measures that you believe can help in securing freedom for ~~Wallenberg~~ Wallenberg.

Yours truly,

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cc: Sec. Haig  
Sen. Sarbanes  
Cong. Long  
Mrs. Annette Lantos

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